

**UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 5**

DATE: August 8, 2002

SUBJECT: Reports of Significant Developments and Activities
Ending on August 2, 2002

FROM: William E. Muno, Director
Superfund Division

TO: Thomas V. Skinner
Regional Administrator

Bharat Mathur
Deputy Regional Administrator

The activities listed below are organized by site-specific activities, other significant developments, training/conferences, and stakeholder feedback:

SITE-SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES

Emergency Response (Acid Spill), Mt. Clemens, Michigan

On July 28, 2002, the City of Mt. Clemens' Water Treatment Plant lost 3,000 gallons of hydrofluorosilicic acid to an abandoned storm drain that leads to Lake St. Clair. The storm drain was fortunately broken and sealed prior to the incident, preventing the acid from reaching the lake. The storm drain, however, leaked and acid appeared on the surface of the ground in an adjoining trailer park. About five trailers were affected and some residents were evacuated.

United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) On-Scene Coordinator (OSC) Ross Powers responded. The City hired a local contractor and immediately cordoned off the area, and contained and recovered the free acid. Acid on the ground was covered with clean sand and will be removed as quickly as possible to prevent its spread.

Contact: Ross Powers (734-692-7681)

Emergency Response, Southeast Avenue Mercury Spill, Tallmadge, Ohio

On July 15, 2002, a non-licensed contractor working for the property owner at a private residence on Southeast Avenue in Tallmadge, Ohio, broke one or more small vials of mercury on the basement floor of the residence. The contractor, who had been retained to clean out the basement after a sewer line overflow,

made several phone calls after the incident to report the mercury release. The local fire department referred the contractor to the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (Ohio EPA).

On July 16, 2002, the Ohio EPA requested U.S. EPA's assistance in mitigating the situation. U.S. EPA On-Scene Coordinator (OSC) Michelle Jaster mobilized the Superfund Technical Assistance & Response Team (START) contractor to the site to conduct mercury vapor monitoring. START was met onsite by Ohio EPA and the local fire department. Initial air monitoring at the residence revealed that the mercury vapor levels in the living areas of the house were as high as 12 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ (micrograms per cubic meter), and readings in the basement were as high as 40 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$. The current recommended acceptable level of mercury vapor in a residence is 1.0 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ or lower. START and Ohio EPA conducted minor containment activities and opened windows in the residence to allow for ventilation of the mercury vapor. The resident agreed to vacate the premises while the cleanup occurred.

Contact: Michelle Jaster (734-692-7683)

Groundwater Monitoring Completed, Seymour Recycling Corporation Superfund Site, Seymour, Indiana

During July 2002, groundwater monitoring sampling was completed for the Seymour Recycling Corporation Superfund site in Seymour, Indiana. Sampling included in the quarterly monitoring activities involves volatile organic compounds, biogeochemical parameters, and field parameters.

The Seymour Recycling Corporation Superfund site is currently in operation & maintenance under a 1987 Record of Decision and 1988 Consent Decree. The remedy includes a hazardous waste cap, and a vapor extraction system which is cycled periodically. The groundwater pump & treatment system was shut off in 2000. It is estimated that over 90% of the contaminant mass has been removed from the monitored groundwater at the Seymour site.

Contact: Jeff Gore (312-886-6552)

Meeting, Calumet Container Site, Hammond, Indiana

On July 31, 2002, U.S. EPA, the Indiana Department of Environmental Management, and the U.S. EPA Superfund Technical Assistance & Response Team (START) contractor, attended the Wolf Lake Vision Implementation Committee meeting at the Hammond Marina in Hammond, Indiana, to explain the recent removal assessment at the Calumet Container site. The Calumet Container site is located on both Illinois and Indiana land, however, it has been given an Indiana address. A discussion of possible re-use of the 11-acre site followed the presentation with most of

the participants favoring wetland restoration. Approximately 30 people attended this meeting.

Contacts: Sally Jansen (312-353-9046)
 Stuart Hill (312-886-0689)
 Verneta Simon (312-886-3601)

OTHER SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS

Publication Released (Region 5 co-author), Belvidere Area Study, Belvidere, Illinois

The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) published *Hydrogeology and Simulation of Ground-Water Flow in the Aquifers Underlying Belvidere, Illinois*, by P.C. Mills, J.E. Nazimek, K.J. Halford and D.J. Yeskis. The Belvidere Area Study was begun in 1992 because of concerns of groundwater interaction between the several Superfund sites in the area, as well as several Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) and other waste-generating facilities. Also, periodically, all of the municipal wells in Belvidere have had detectable levels of volatile organic compound (VOC) contaminants, with water samples from several of the wells exceeding the maximum contaminant levels (MCLs). This report was jointly funded by the U.S. EPA and the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (Illinois EPA). Three previous USGS reports summarized historical available data (Brown and Mills, 1995), a temporal water-level measurement and sampling events, geophysical investigations and geochemical characterization (Mills, Yeskis and Straub, 1998), and a synoptic water-quality study (Mills, Thomas, Brown, Yeskis and Kay, 1999). This report summarizes the groundwater flow model for the area based on the hydrogeologic data available to date. All of the reports and study results will be helpful for long-term planning of response actions and environmental priorities by the local, State, and Federal agencies. Also, the USGS provided valuable site-specific technical support on each of the Superfund sites and one emergency response. The interest in this area study was high. The City of Belvidere provided in-kind services and the Illinois EPA contributed additional funds beyond the U.S. EPA funding.

Contact: Douglas Yeskis (312-886-0408)

Chair Selected, 2003 National Association of Government Communicators School, New Orleans, Louisiana

Ginny Narsete, Public Affairs Specialist from the Emergency Response Branch, will be chairing the National Association of Government Communicators (NAGC) Communications School in April 2003 in New Orleans. NAGC is a national not-for-profit professional network of Federal, State, and local government employees who disseminate information within and outside the

government. Its members are editors, writers, graphic artists, managers, video professionals, broadcasters, photographers, information specialists, and agency spokespersons. NAGC is the only organization for, by, and about government communicators and communications. The Communications School is the only event of its kind and includes presentations of the Blue Pencil and Gold Screen Awards, recognizing excellence in written, filmed, audio/videotaped, published, and photographed government information products. In 2002, The Minnesota Pollution Control won many awards for brochures, fact sheets, and outreach material related to environmental outreach. The 2002 school focused on Internal Crisis communications, website design, mediation techniques, new technology, and publishers/editors from USA today, Wall street journal, Washington Post, and Cleveland Plain dealer.

See <http://www.nagc.com/publications/summer02/summer2002.pdf> for more information.

Contact: Ginny Narsete (312-886-4359)

TRAINING/CONFERENCES

Anthrax Workshop, Traverse City, Grand Traverse County, Michigan

On July 24, 2002, On-Scene Coordinators Mark Durno and Jeff Kimble, accompanied by a U.S. EPA training contractor, conducted an Anthrax Workshop for the Traverse City Fire Department in Traverse City, Grand Traverse County, Michigan. Approximately 15-20 firefighters attended the workshop.

Lecture sessions for the workshop were conducted in the morning and consisted of: Capitol Hill response case study (anthrax cleanup of the Hart Senate Office Building), Indianapolis response case study (postal facility cleanup), Region 5 anthrax hoax response summary, and crime scene awareness. During the course of the presentations, the firefighters were given the opportunity to participate in an open dialog and discuss incidents which occurred in Traverse City as an after effect to the anthrax incidents last Fall.

The afternoon session of the workshop consisted of several hands-on training and demonstrations. Sample collection, field screening techniques for anthrax, and decontamination procedures were the topics presented during the afternoon session.

Contacts: Mark Durno (440-250-1743)
Jeff Kimble (734-692-7688)

STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK**Letter of Appreciation, Unannounced Exercises,**

A thank you letter, dated July 22, 2002, from R.C. Patyrak, Industry Council on the Environment, was sent to Ann Whelan for a talk given on July 18, 2002, covering unannounced exercises and other topics. The letter included the following: ". . . I wish to personally express ICE's (Industrial Council on the Environment) gratitude. Your comments, materials, and presentation were right on target and very well done as was evidenced by the questions asked and answered. It is clear to me that you have a detailed understanding of the issues . . . "

Contact: Ann Whelan (312-886-7258)

cc: Marianne Horinko (OSWER)
Barry Breen (OECA)
Steve Luftig (OSWER)
Larry Reed (OERR)
Larry Zaragoza (OSWER)
Craig Beasley (OSWER)
Michael Shapiro (OSWER)
Sylvia Lowrance (OECA)
Mike Cook (OERR)
Region 5 State Superfund Coordinators
Division/Office Directors
ORA State Coordinators
Regional Team Managers